

[REDACTED]
C/O Anthony Corben
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Dorset
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Our ref: 23/052
10 January 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Development Potential.
Land adj. No. 48 Victoria Avenue, Swanage, BH19 1AP.

Thank you for your instruction seeking professional town planning consultancy advice in relation to the development potential of a plot of land at No.48 Victoria Avenue, Swanage, Dorset.

By way of credentials, I am a Chartered Town Planner and member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI) with 25 years' experience in development management services. Within that time, I was employed by both Purbeck District Council and later Dorset Council as a Senior Planning Officer determining larger planning applications in Swanage and the surrounding areas, including many apartment type developments.

Site Analysis

The site is situated within the defined urban area for Swanage where development plan policy, in the form of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 ([PLP1](#)), and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ([NPPF](#)) both support new residential development in principle. This would be subject to the normal material planning considerations of size, scale, design, access, neighbour amenity, trees etc., as one might expect.

The plot is large and rectilinear, and relatively unconstrained. Land levels rise gently from the frontage along Victoria Avenue (south) to the rear (north), where the land abuts a service road.

The immediate character of the area is a mix of large family houses and larger flatted development. The hierarchy of buildings increases as you proceed east towards the seafront. The larger apartment buildings are well designed, and masquerade as houses. These are built of brick and local Purbeck stone and assimilate into the streetscene and complement the character of the area.

Relevant Planning History

Of relevance are the two recent redevelopments on land at No.48 Victoria Avenue, both larger apartment developments –

P/FUL/2022/00797 *'Erect a block of 2 flats and 2 maisonettes with car parking'* by DP Lovell Ltd. in 2022. APPROVED

P/FUL/6/2020/0585 *'Erect 5 flats with associated parking'* by A&T Lovell in 2020. APPROVED

The development nearest the site has been completed and sold, with the other nearing completion. Both are comparable in size, scale and design and complement the streetscene. The two buildings are built to a high design standard and provide adequate amenity space and parking to the rear of the site, with access onto the service lane. These two planning consents provide a strong precedent for a similar development approach on the current site.

Site Constraints

As noted above, the site is relatively unconstrained. To my mind there are two main issues to consider, both of which can be adequately addressed (i) flooding) and (ii) biodiversity and climate change.

(i) Flooding

The Environment Agency (EA) flood mapping systems indicate that the majority of the development site is within Flood Zone 1 – low risk, however a small portion of land alongside Victoria Avenue is within Flood Zone 2. This area has a medium probability of river flooding from the Swan Brook. The site is also defined as having a low risk from surface water flooding, and no risk of groundwater flooding.

The issue of flooding was fully assessed by planning officers when considering the development of the site immediately adjacent. The Officer Report on the latest approval P/FUL/2022/00797 (April 2022) for 48 Victoria Road stated that, due to the Swanage Flood Alleviation Scheme, the Environment Agency considered that the immediate area was no longer considered to be at risk from flooding.

Nevertheless, in making a planning application a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) would be required to be undertaken by a qualified consultant to demonstrate that any residential development was resilient to flooding. I would be confident that by setting the built footprint within Flood Zone 1 at an appropriate raised finished floor level, and providing access to the rear service lane, that the development will be considered resilient and can be protected from flooding. In these respects, flooding does not present a constraint to the site.

(ii) Biodiversity and climate change

From 2024 Dorset Council are now seeking Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on all new larger development schemes. In its simplest form the site is given a 'score' for its

existing biodiversity habitat, with a requirement that the completed development provides a biodiversity net gain of 10%.

BNG can be achieved through planting of native species of trees and hedges, along with the provision of bat or bird boxes, bee bricks etc. I would advise that on this particular site, a suitably qualified ecologist be engaged to draw up a scheme of BNG which can be agreed with the Council. Again, this issue can be easily overcome.

In relation to climate change, Dorset Council now require planning applications to be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement showing how the site responds to climate change. This can be achieved through high insulation values, use of local materials (Swanage Brick and Purbeck stone, for example), solar panels, air source heat pumps and rainwater capture to irrigate the garden. There is also opportunity to fit low energy lighting and low flow taps within the development. The provision of such measures can be easily incorporated onto the scheme and would add to final sales values as energy costs for future occupants would be reduced.

Site Opportunities.

Given the site location, close to the town centre and beach, it would be fair to say that a residential use would provide the maximum use value for the site. To my mind, the plot offers the opportunity for a higher density residential use in the form of flats, and/or maisonettes similar to those recently built on the adjacent sites.

The size of the site would lend itself to a 5/6 unit scheme contained within a large, well designed building. This would likely be a full two storeys in height providing 4 units, with further units formed within the roof lit by gable end windows front and back. The front unit would enjoy wide views across the park towards the heritage railway line. A height of around 10m should be achievable ensuring these upper units are not compromised in height and form.

Much like the recent developments alongside, the use of Swanage brick with Purbeck stone quoins and cills would assist the development to fit in with the existing character of the streetscene.

Parking can be provided a rate of 1 space per unit, which would be accepted by Dorset Council due to the close proximity of the site to town. These spaces might be given electrical charging points to add sales value and increase the environmental credentials of the scheme.

There is ample space for outdoor amenity for residents along with adequate space for bins and recycling containers.

The site affords an excellent opportunity to provide a purpose built high quality 5/6 unit apartment block that would likely command a high sales value due to its location.

Summary

The plot is located within a sustainable location within easy level walking distance of Swanage town centre and the beach, where both local and national planning policies would support new residential development.

The site is largely unconstrained and provides an excellent development opportunity for a high density residential use in the form of an apartment block. Given the previous approval of two large apartment blocks nearby in 2020 and 2022, I would be confident that a 5/6 unit scheme could be developed on site. The issues of flooding and biodiversity can be readily overcome and would not be constraints to development.

I trust the above is helpful, naturally if you require any further information, please get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Gareth Kitching

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